



# Teaching Notes



## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Davina Bell is a writer from Western Australia. Davina lives and works in Melbourne, where she still dreams about the Western Australian beaches while drinking a lot of very good Melbourne coffee.



## ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHY

Allison Colpoys is an award-winning book designer and illustrator, and a lover of pattern and typography.

### *Paper aeroplanes*

There are lots of different ways to make paper aeroplanes. Here are some instructions for a simple version, but you can research different designs on the internet to make lots and lots of planes!

1. Take a sheet of A4 paper
2. Fold the paper in half vertically
3. Unfold the paper and fold each of the top corners into the middle line, and then fold the corners in half diagonally again
4. Fold the plane in half toward you
5. Fold the wings down, matching the top edges up with the bottom edge of the body
6. Let it fly!

### *Games with teams*

There are so many games with teams that you can play with your friends:

- Poison ball (some people call this dodgeball)
  - Scavenger hunt
  - Tunnel ball
  - Even regular soccer and footy is best when you play with friends
- But here's a challenge – can you make up a new game?

### *Storytelling*

Can you tell a collective story? All you'll need is a group of friends. One person starts the story, and everyone takes it in turns to add new twists and turns. Each person could have a time limit (30 seconds) or a word limit (4 words or 40 words) before the next person takes over the story. Make sure you pay attention so you can keep the story going!

## HOW MANY WAYS TO BE SMART?

The text for *All the Ways To Be Smart* is structured loosely around Gardner's Theory of Nine Intelligences. This framework was created by Howard Gardner, a Harvard professor, in response to what he perceived to be the very limited picture of intelligence that is painted by psychometric testing, like the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Gardner identified what he believed to be nine areas that extended far beyond the traditional limits of logical and linguistic intelligence.

I was inspired to write a text that gave comfort to children by identifying the inherent intelligence in areas of their lives that they might not have considered to be 'smart'. I wanted to speak directly into the heart of those children who didn't feel that they were good at

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anything because they didn't perform well on traditional measures of academic intelligence. I also wanted to instil the idea that everyone around them was also inherently 'smart', and to develop both a radar for recognising these moments in their lives – and seeing them in others' – and to provide a springboard for discussions with adults and caregivers in their lives to talk about what intelligence means, and how their actions fit into those ideas.

So every sentence in the book is an expression of one of Gardner's intelligences – all of which are represented multiple times in the text. 'Being sorry when you're naughty', for example, is an expression of inter-personal intelligence. 'Knowing where you're going' is related to spatial intelligence. 'Drawing witches hats' and 'gluing wings on bats' are a manifestation of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. 'Floating off on daytime dreams' relates to intra-personal intelligence – understanding and reflecting on yourself. The others are linguistic, logical-mathematical, existential, musical and naturalist.



It is my greatest hope that this book shapes how children view themselves – that it gives confidence to children who have been doubting their own worth and balance to children who have been praised – perhaps even overly – for being good at spelling bees and tricky tests. I hope that our book sows seeds of self-worth that continue to sprout long after our child readers think they have outgrown picture books, and the combination of Allison's glorious illustrations and innate sensitivity to the child's world provide them with respite, inspiration and moments of delicious escape.

## INTERVIEW WITH DAVINA BELL

### WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR WRITING ALL THE WAYS TO BE SMART?

The inspiration for *All the Ways To Be Smart* came from a conversation between the illustrator, Allison, and her niece, Belle, at the dining-room table. Belle had been trying to remember who sang a particular pop song. She'd sung the song and drawn the singer, but Allison couldn't help her figure it out. Her big sister walked in, remembered the singer in two seconds and flounced out again, leaving Belle despondent, feeling as if she would never be as smart or good at remembering. Allison tried to give her a pep talk about being good at different things, reminding Belle that she was younger, and maybe one day she'd be just as good, or smart at something else altogether.



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Belle didn't seem to be paying attention and went back to drawing witches hats. But a little while later, she turned to Allison and said, 'These are my best witches hats ever. Maybe I am smart at drawing witches' hats.'



'Smart at drawing witches' hats became the first line of the book, because Belle's story inspired me to want to tell kids that they have their own unique and incomparable intelligence.

## **CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU FIRST BECAME A WRITER OR AN ILLUSTRATOR?**

I wrote my first book – a middle-grade novel about a ballerina in World War One – when I was 29 and working as a children's book editor. But I think I really became a writer as a child, through long nights by torchlight under my bed covers. I still have a story I wrote when I was 8, and while it's wild and weird and not at all good, I can see myself as a writer on those pages – the energy and the love of language and the slightly offbeat imagination. All that came from a love of reading. So many good things in my life have come from books.

## **WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PICTURE BOOK CREATORS?**

It is so hard to pick just a few, but today they are Julie Morstad and Julia Donaldson, Isabelle Arsenault and Beatrice Alemagna, Jane Godwin and Anna Walker, Marc Martin and Maurice Sendak, Judith Kerr and Shirley Hughes. All so smart in their own ways!



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